

David Charles'

Boston Vintage Sports Flashback

ISSUE #2 – January 15, 2023

MARCH 10, 1946

BRUINS BELT LEAFS, 7-3

Defeat Eliminates Toronto From Stanley Cup Playoffs

By Tom Fitzgerald, The Boston Globe

Any flickering hope that Toronto's Maple Leafs were entertaining for a mathematical miracle which would have enabled them to back into the playoffs in defense of the Stanley Cup was rudely blasted by the Bruins at the Garden last night.

Bursting forth with a puissant last period attack that netted six goals, the Boston club practically blew the winners of last year's classic out of the auditorium over the depot by a 7-3 count.

Armand "Beppo" Guidolin, the aggressive left winger of the sprout line, was the most conspicuous producer of the evening with two goals, the first and last of the evening.

Bep's first effort was about the most stylish thing seen on Boston ice this year. Early in the middle session he took the puck in front of the Boston bench, outskated Syl Apps and Nick Metz, and sadly hoodwinked Moose Morris before he beat Turk Broda.

Before that period ended, Wally Stanowski tied it up on a screened 50-footer. But in the last period the pastime burst apart at the seams under pressure of the Bruins power.

The triumph coupled with Chicago's 3-to-1 defeat by Montreal sent the surging Bruins into second place.

Conacher Is Acclaimed

The Kitchener colleagues, Bobby Bauer and Woody Dumont, alternated in setting 'em up for one another to produce a brace 20 seconds apart a little after the start of the final session. Then followed the most loudly acclaimed tally of them all when Roy Conacher, absent since the final game of the 1942 playoffs, thundered in one of his patented howitzer shots with the slick assistance of his old play-making genius, Billy Cowley, himself returning after a 24-game lapse because of an injured hand.

Defenseman Johnny Crawford and Murray Henderson registered on 50-footers one after another. And of course Guidolin got the seventh Boston goal.

Between the Henderson and Guidolin tallies, however, came two for Toronto, one of them endowed with sentiment which Boston fans heartily shared. The Leafs' Sweeney Shriver took a neat pass from Bud Poile and beat Frankie Bimsek easily for the 200th goal of his career. While the gathering pattered approval, Sweeney set aside both puck and stick for souvenirs. The third

Toronto goal resulted from a neat solo by Bobby Goldham.

The Cowley-Conacher line which had Terry Reardon on right wing, satisfied observant onlookers. They need a little time to gain cohesiveness, and Conacher still may need more work. But Bill and Roy showed definite signs of their old polish and know-how on more than one occasion.

JANUARY 11, 1968

SANDERSON GOAL SAVES BRUINS, 5-4

Tally in Third Period Offset Red Wing Rally

By Tom Fitzgerald, The Boston Globe

Derek (Turk) Sanderson, who should be a shoo-in for the rookie trophy if there is any justice, lifted the Bruins to a 5-4 victory over the Detroit Red Wings to the screams of 13,698 in the Garden Thursday night.

The lively 21-year-old center did a beautiful, old-fashioned job of stick handling to rescue the game at 8:05 of the final period.

After passes by Bobby Orr and Eddie Shack, Turk went weaving through the red-sirted defenders in their own zone. Ultimately, the kid shook off defenseman Kent Douglas and blew a backhand shot from the right into the far side of the nets past Roy Edwards.

Sanderson was in a mood for celebration after the game but he was quick to hand out some credit.

"The pass (from Shack) made the play," Turk said. "The goalie was trying to cut the angle on me. I made him think I was going for it, then I got the backhand up over him."

This hard-earned decision brought the Bruins back to within two points of the first-place Black Hawks and Boston still holds a game in hand over the Chicago rivals.

The contest was a reasonably close facsimile of the thriller between the clubs here in late in November. The Bruins were ahead 3-0 within 13 minutes on a quick pair by Phil Esposito (his 20th and 21st) and another on a breakaway by Skip Krake while he was killing a penalty.

But then there was a turnabout that was predicted the day before the game by Bruins' coach Harry Sinden.

"There is no such thing as a safe lead against them," Harry said. "They have too many good opportunities."

The Wings kept battling back, even when they lapsed later to a 4-2 deficit.

There was a pair of goals by Norm Ullman, who now has

seven against Boston for the season, and one by defenseman Douglas, just obtained in a trade with Oakland.

A blast from the point by Don Awrey gave the Bruins the 4-2 jump before Ullman bagged his second score.

The man who hauled Detroit back on even terms at 4-4 during a power play at 15:15 in the second was the indestructible Gordie Howe.

The 39-year-old planted his substantial hulk in front of the Boston net, then made a quick wristy finish on a perfect pass in from his long time buddy, Alex Delvecchio.

There was much similarity to the November pairing, when the Bruins were also ahead, 3-0, then were caught at 5-5 before scoring two late goals.

There was furious attacking by Detroit again in the last period of this game when goalie Gerry Cheevers was at his best. Gerry had a series of key saves, including very good ones on Howe, Dean Prentice and Ullman.

Cheevers, with his ailing shoulder apparently in sound shape, breathed a sigh of relief at the finish.

"It's tough when you're ahead 3-0," he said, "and then you have them make four shots and score on two of them. It was good we pulled it out."

Esposito's first goal for Boston was after a busy flurry on a rebound of John McKenzie at 4:22. Then, with Howe out for elbowing, Phil whacked home a close pass by John Bucyk at 6:05.

Ted Green was out when Krake stopped a Detroit shot on his shin pads, then set sail for an unimpressed effort to beat Edwards.

DECEMBER 29, 1973

CELT'S PLAY BUMP AND RUN

They Run, Cavs Get Bumped, 111-92

By Bob Ryan, The Boston Globe

PROVIDENCE - The Celtics hit the lowly Cleveland cavaliers with a savage first-quarter two-way display of professional basketball last night and went on for as easy a victory as they've had all year, a 111-92 decision.

The lead was 27 (88-61) after three quarters, and the only questions then were: a) how soon would everybody play and b) how big would the final margin be?

A brilliant first quarter of defense and running propelled the Celtics into a 62-41 lead in a first half of play only slightly shorter in length than the Thirty Years War.

Referees Mark Schlafman and Bob Rakel called a total of 18 team fouls, one offensive foul and a technical on Tom Heinsohn during the seemingly endless second quarter, during which time the Celtics were able to add five points to their 16-point (30-14) one-period margin.

The Cavs hung in for about two and a half minutes, even grabbing a 6-4 lead on a Jim Brewer jumper, before Boston applied the pressure on defense, forcing turnovers and ripping off such breaks as 16 straight, 24-6 and 28-8 in the last 10 minutes.

Fittingly, a steal by Don Chancey and subsequent scoop fastbreak lay-up got the Celtics started. Defense was the big

word, as Boston switched effectively and simply wouldn't allow the Cavs anything better than a 20-footer - if they could get a shot at all.

Jo Jo White was the big offensive threat, pumping in 12 points in just 4:28 while the Celtics were moving from an 8-8 tie to a 22-10 lead. Jo was doing a little bit of everything, stealing the ball, making fast-break layups and canning long jumpers.

The best the Cavaliers could get out of the second quarter was some basket trading. Brewer's jumper narrowed the lead to 14 (30-16) early in the period, but Boston kept hustling and led by around 20 most of the way, with the peak lead coming on a pair of Cowens free throws which made it 60-36 with 1:34 remaining.

Unlike the Phoenix disaster of two weeks ago, this time the Celtics played a strong enough third quarter to escalate the big halftime bulge, moving to an 88-61 three-period lead.

Boston never allowed the Cavs closer than a 19-point deficit, and Heinie even saw fit to use Phil Hankinson early, sending him in for Chaney with 3:35 left in the period, to the cheers of the crowd.

MARCH 25, 1986

CELTICS CLINCH EAST

By Larry Whiteside, The Boston Globe

So winning is monotonous, huh? That may be true when the Celtics square off with a lot of NBA teams, but not when they are forced to the limit, as they were last night by the Milwaukee Bucks.

Boston claimed all the prizes that were available with its 121-115 victory at the Garden. By winning their 59th game, the Celtics clinched the best record in the Eastern Conference, eliminating the Bucks (50-23) from contention for that honor - and the home-court advantage in the conference playoffs. Now the Celtics' only remaining regular-season incentive is the best record overall in the NBA, and the Lakers are Boston's lone remaining competition.

As a bonus, the Celtics' verdict over the Central Division leader moved them within one victory of their first series sweep against Milwaukee since 1979-80.

The Bucks (21-16) are one of the NBA's better road teams, but last night they suffered a two-minute lapse in the fourth quarter, and it wound up costing them a five-game winning streak.

"But the game was more than the Celtics just getting the breaks in the fourth quarter," said Bucks coach Don Nelson, who considered the game a major test for his troops. The Bucks play at Philadelphia tonight, and a two-game sweep of the Atlantic Division's top teams would have been a tremendous lift for the play-offs.

"I felt like we did a good job of following our game plan," said Nelson. "But they played better at the end."

"This is the best Celtics team, period. It's better than any I played on. We still have other goals to accomplish in our division and against Philadelphia. But we would love to be playing Boston (in the conference play-off final)."

None of 14,890 who filled the Garden for the 254th consecutive time would argue that point. The Bucks represented a late-season challenge, and Boston had to respond to the offensive

thrusts of Terry Cummings (31 points) and Sidney Moncrief (25). Larry Bird's 35 points and Dennis Johnson's 29 were vital.

After three quarters, the celtics trailed, 92-21, and their home-court winning streak, which now stands at 25, was in jeopardy.

Milwaukee had played intelligently, forcing Boston to use its complete arsenal. The Bucks controlled the tempo, and Boston needed all the muscle that Robert Parish, Bill Walton and Kevin McHale could muster to come out with a 48-41 rebounding edge. At crunch time, with the Celtics leading, 111-109, McHale's timely block set up a six-point run that put the game on ice.

Moncrief scored 23 points in the first half, principally against Bird. Coach K.C. Jones wisely reasoned that Bird didn't need to expend that much energy, and assigned Johnson, who thrives on such situations, to guard Moncrief.

Moncrief got only two points in the second half.

But nothing slowed down Cummings and Paul Pressey (12 points) in the second half. The game was tied nine times in the third quarter. In the final period, Boston had all it could do to hold on to a four-point lead, which eventually disappeared as Milwaukee pulled into a 109-109 tie.

But Bird then sank a basket, McHale blocked Cummings' layup attempt, Bird hit a layup for a four-point lead and then added two free throws for a cushion the Bucks couldn't overcome.

"I could see Cummings coming across the middle," said McHale. "I had him played to the left, and when he tried to shoot with his right hand, I was able to block it.

"This kind of game is very good for us, especially at this point in the season. It would be nice to play no one but Milwaukee or Philadelphia or that kind of team from this point on, but unfortunately, that is not going to happen."

Jones considered Milwaukee's challenge typical.

"That's especially true in our conference," he said. "It's like an obstacle everyplace we play in the East. Tough teams are ready and know that a victory would make their season.

"People see us with a 10- or 20-point lead and think it's easy. But we have some nights when it's as hard to maintain those leads as it was tonight. The Bucks are a good team. They don't like to lose, and neither do we."

AUGUST 17, 1928

RUSSELL PITCHES AND BATS RED SOX TO WIN

Carrigan Crew Gets to Ted Lyons in the Sixth - Boston Boys Win 4-3 In 11 Innings

By James C. O'Leary, The Boston Globe

Jack Russell, one of Bill Carrigan's colts, not only pitched a great game against the White Sox yesterday at Fenway Park, but he drove in the winning run in the 11th inning, which gave the Red Sox a 4-to-3 victory. Russell made two of the eight hits registered by the Boston boys, one of which was a double. Taking it by and large it came pretty near being a perfect day for Jack.

Ted Lyons, who was opposed to him on the mound, has

always been a tough baby for the Red Sox to beat, but they got to him in one inning yesterday when they bunched four of their eight bingles, which netted three runs, and then carried him along in a test of endurance in which he came out second best, two passes in the final session being factors in his downfall.

Both pitchers were accorded perfect support. The Red Sox infield was a stone wall; Myer, Rogell, Regan and Todt hadled some difficult chances with neatness and dispatch. Mostil's running, jumping catch of Todt's drive to right center in the ninth inning was the most spectacular in the play of the game. Swanson, at second, had plenty of chances, and handled them like an artist.

Cissell Injured

Cissell, the White Sox shortstop, sustained a compound fracture of the index finger, on his left hand in handling a thrown ball in the New York series, and Redfern was used at short. Cissell probably will be out of the game for the season.

It looked like a pitchers' battle at the opening of hostilities yesterday. Mostil, the first batter to face Russell, opened with a double to left, but never reached third, being trapped between second and third on Swanson's grounder to Russell, and run down.

The visitors were retired in the ordr of their coming to bat thereafter, until the fifth inning, when singles in succession by Kamm, Clancy and Redfern, the first three batters up, put over one run, but the next three to face Russell were easy outs.

The Red Sox were set down as fast as they came up until two were out in the fourth, when Buddy Myer registered Boston's first hit. He stole second and kept on to third, as Lyons uncorked a wild pitch, but was left there.

In the sixth, though, there was a surge by the Red Sox. Berry led off with a single; Russell sacrificed him to second, and Rothrock brought him home with a single to center, Jack taking second on the throw home; Rogell, chased Rothrock over the plate when Myers doubled to left. Regan was passd, but neither Flagstead nor Williams could produce a hit.

Two-Run Lead Lost

The two-run lead of the Red Sox was wiped out in the next frame. Clancy opened with a double; Redfern was passed; Berg sacrificed, and then Lyon lobbed a single to short left, which put Clancy and Redfern over with the tying runs. Mostil forced Lyons and was himself out when he attempted to steal second.

In the eighth Swanson and Metzler, the first two, hit safely, and Falk sacrificed, but Kamm and Clancy were easy outs, the former popping to Todt, the latter grounding out to the same player.

In the ninth, with one out, Berg doubled, and Adkins was sent in to run for him; Lyons was thrown out by Regan; Mostil was purposely passed, and swanson was thrown out at first by Myer, retiring the side. The White Sox never threatened again.

Mostil robbed Todt of a triple play by a great catch in the ninth; Rothrock, with one down in the 10th, beat out a bunt; Rogell sacrificed; Lyons wouldn't take a chance with Myer and purposely passed him, which proved to be the right dope, as Regan was an easy out.

In the 11th Flagstead, first up, walked; Williams flied to Metzler; Todt forced "Flaggy"; Berry was passed; Russell singled to left, putting Todt over with the winning run.

AUGUST 11, 1977

WISE AND RICE (30TH HOMER) RATTLE SEATTLE, 7-2

By Larry Whiteside, The Boston Globe

The words came easy when people spoke of Rick Wise last night. Control, consistency. A strong competitor who is in one of those most magnificent streaks that have made him Boston's best pitcher the last couple of weeks.

Who would have guessed on May 19 when Wise was laboring after a 16-day layoff that the first Red Sox starter to win nine games would be Rick Wise. But he made it look easy last night by scattering eight hits and hurling Boston to a 7-2 victory over the Seattle Mariners before 27,005 at Fenway Park.

Wise (9-4) was given a 6-0 lead after two innings and coasted to victory, walking two and striking out seven. And what he showed last night was a continuation of the kind of pitching he has given the Red Sox since he found himself back in the starting rotation on June 8th. Wise has won five of his last seven starts with a 2.41 ERA over that period.

"He pitched well," said Red Sox manager Don Zimmer. "We got him some runs early, but I have an idea that Rick Wise would pitch the same with a one-run or a 12-run lead. He's a good thinker and probably has as good an idea of what he wants to do with the baseball as anyone on our club."

"He's got that great control," said Darrell Johnson, the former Red Sox manager and Seattle skipper. "And when he's on, all he's got to do is move that fastball of his in and out. It makes his breaking ball even better."

This was a rocking chair kind of game for Wise after the first two innings. Boston loaded the bases in the first, and pushed across a pair of runs on Carl Yastrzemski's ground-out and a sacrifice fly by George Scott.

The Red Sox exploded for four more in the second, an inning highlighted by Jim Rice's 30th home run, a two-run blast off loser Paul Mitchell, the Worcester native who was making his first start for the Mariners after being acquired from Oakland last week. Mitchell is 0-4 on the season.

Rice's home run gave him the American League homer lead again over California's Bobby Bonds, who has 29. The ball struck a stanchion holding up the screen and made Rice the first Red Sox player since Reggie Smith in 1971 to hit 30 home runs in a season.

"I don't know how exactly what it was," said Rice. "If you're swinging good, it doesn't matter what they throw up there."

While happy with his victory, and particularly his location last night, Wise remains uneasy over the subject of his slow start. The fact that he didn't start a game from May 3 to June 8 still bugs him, and he is out to show his best stuff on every outing. Seattle has now lost eight straight to Boston and has won just one. They beat Wise on May 3, 10-8.

"I've been pitching pretty well in my last 7-8 starts," said Wise. "I don't care if I have one run or 12. I still try to limit any team I face to as few runs as possible."

"I still try to pitch as smart a game as I can with a big lead. I try to make good pitches, but that doesn't mean I'm out there throwing fastballs over the middle of the plate. There are a lot of

ways to skin a cat. And if I can get them out on six pitches, I'll take it. I'm not known as a strikeout pitcher anyway."

Wise was asked if he had any special satisfaction in being the first starter to win nine games, in only 16 starts.

"There might be some," he said with a smile. "I've felt I could pitch and those three games in April don't make a slump. I've always felt that the guys who have done it before can do it again. I've been the first or second winner on this club for the last couple of years."

If Wise had great location, Mitchell was awful, the result of two-weeks of inactivity. He walked Rick Burleson and Fred Lynn to start the game and gave up a single to Rice to start the Red Sox rolling in the first inning. In the second, with two out, he gave up a run-scoring double to Lynn and Rice's booming home run.

Boston got another run on a walk to Carl Yastrzemski and a double by Carlton Fisk in the inning, and finished off the scoring in the sixth when Lynn doubled with one out off John Montague, and Yaz singled off lefty Mike Kekich, after Kekich had brushed him back.

Wise gave up single runs in the third and fifth innings, but otherwise was untouched. The victory enabled Boston to remain a game and a half ahead of Baltimore, which beat Oakland, 6-1

SEPTEMBER 29, 1980

IT'S A GREAT NIGHT FOR PATRIOTS, 23-14

By Michael Madden, The Boston Globe

FOXBOROUGH - The night started with 11,000 fans banging on the ticket windows, yearning to get inside Schaefer Stadium. And it ended with Richard Bishop sacking Matt Robinson and the Denver Broncos eager to get out, relieved that their Night to Forget finally was over.

In between, the Patriots thoroughly starched the Broncos, 23-14, on a night that not only saw the Patriots sell 11,000 game-day tickets but also featured a New England win on national television. The former is a record; the latter is a marvel.

"The dog finally had his day," said an exuberant coach Ron Erhardt after the game. "I've been thinking about this one all week. I wish we had scored 30 points; damn, we should of had 30."

Erhardt had a score to settle from last year with Red Miller, the Denver coach, and the Patriots' coach did it this night with every page from his playbook - and end-around on third and inches, a fake end-around and a planned pass from Harold Jackson that ended up with a 16-yard run, the usual bomb to Stanley Morgan and a fourth-quarter ground attack that ate up 12:31 and then spit out the Broncos.

"This is the way we can play defense," said linebacker Rod Shoate. "This is the way we should play defense. This is the way we're going to play defense."

True, Denver picked up only eight first downs, Robinson completed only eight passes and the Denver game plan was as imaginative as a Harold Robins novel. It was a defensive offense, one that again showed that the Broncos don't have a quarterback.

"We knew they'd open up with two tight ends and come at us with the run," said Erhardt. "We were ready for it." What Erhardt didn't know was that Miller would stay with this

Neanderthal offense until the second half, throwing only when forced to and then only to his running backs, and keeping home run hitter Rick Upchurch on the bench. Don Zimmer makes moves quicker than that.

"It was poor play selection," explained Miller. "The plays come through me, so give the blame to me. What we were trying to do was protect him (Robinson) from interceptions." Because he was worried about the New England defense or worried about Robinson? "The latter," replied Miller.

But New England has a quarterback, and last night Steve Grogan completed 17 of 24 passes for 209 yards and one TD. "You all should give Grogan credit," said placekicker John Smith. He had his knee drained twice last week, he wasn't sure he'd be able to play until this morning, and then he got out and plays like the best quarterback in the NFL."

Denver took a 7-0 lead in the first quarter on a 17-yard TD pass from Robinson to Haven Moses, one of few north-south passes that Robinson threw all night. But Smith (three field goals) came back with a 26-yarder late in the first period before the Patriots stitched together a 66-yard drive in seven plays early in the second quarter.

The TD pass was set up by a pass interference call on the Broncos' Bernard Jackson while defending a Grogan pass to tight end Russ Francis. The penalty teed up the Patriots at the Denver 5-yard line before two penalties set New England back to the 25.

Now Grogan spotted Francis again. The tight end did a superior imitation of the Rubber Man and reached high over his head for a catch at the 5. A roughing-the-passer call on the same play moved the ball to the 2 before rookie Vagas Ferguson slithered through the right side and scored.

But the Broncos took a 14-10 lead early in the second half after Ferguson fumbled at his 37. Robinson (8 of 12, 83 yards) caught the Patriots safety Roland James blitzing. Moses zipped past James down the left sideline and caught a 23-yard pass. On the next play, Otis Armstrong blasted through the right side from 8 yards out for the score.

But this was to be the Patriots' night. Spurred by the near-sellout crowd of 60,153, The Monday Night TV euphoria and the surprise return of Bishop and Mike Haynes, the Patriots were intent on playing some serious football - and it produced only their second victory in nine Monday night tries.

They finally began after the Broncos' TD. New England started on its 22-yard line, and Grogan quickly hit fullback Don Calhoun for 8 yards, Morgan for 17 over the middle and then pulled the pass on the Patriots' weekly bomb, a 45-yarder to Morgan that gave New England the lead for good, 17-14 with 11:52 left in the third quarter. Smith added field goals of 19 and 36 yards in the fourth quarter.

Thus, Erhardt had his revenge - and the Patriots finally put on an impressive show for a nationwide audience.

NOVEMBER 19, 1989

PATRIOTS' COMEBACK BEATS BILLS

4th-Quarter Rally Erases 24-13 Deficit

By Mark Blaudschun, The Boston Globe

FOXBOROUGH - A season of frustration was being replayed before their very eyes. Interceptions, tipped balls, fumbles, touchdowns called back. Once again, the New England Patriots were the ultimate tease, tormenting their fans and themselves with an uneven effort that left them wondering what else could go wrong in this maddening season.

With 8:46 remaining in yesterday's game against the Buffalo Bills, the Patriots trailed, 24-13. The 49,663 fans on the cold, blustery afternoon at Sullivan Stadium were reaching for their car keys, preparing to digest another stomach-turning loss by a team whose main accomplishment this season has been to find a different way to lose each week.

"What else we didn't want," said Patriots guard Sean Farrell, "was to be embarrassed. But everybody was wondering what was going on."

Everybody still is, but in a much different sense, with a perspective that only the Bruins seem to have these days.

In a comeback of epic proportions in terms of confidence-boosting, the Patriots spun off 20 points in 9 minutes to beat the Bills going away, 33-24.

"It wasn't a picturesque thing, but it was fine because our guys never quit," said coach Raymond Berry, who has had to maintain a bunker mentality the last few weeks as grenades from the media and fans have been tossed in his direction because of the 3-7 record New England brought into yesterday's game.

Berry talked about guts and endurance. He talked about keeping a positive attitude in a negative atmosphere that existed everywhere but in a confined area of Sullivan Stadium.

Yesterday, the Patriots translated those words into action shots that will comfort them for at least a week, as quarterback Steve Grogan explained.

The comeback came in a steady wave against a Buffalo team that may have been too full of itself despite the warning of coach Marv Levy, who correctly predicted that 3-7 teams sometimes are more dangerous than 7-3 squads that are thinking about their playoff opponents.

It also came because running back John Stephens shook off his foot and hip ailments and put together a career game with 126 yards rushing and 76 yards on pass receptions, transmitting his enthusiasm and desire to win along the line of scrimmage. "When he's running the ball well," said Farrell, "everyone looks better."

Collectively that meant an offense and a defense which has suffered enough injuries in both body and spirit this year to claim workers' compensation.

The offense started the roll following Buffalo's final touchdown - a 25-yard pass from quarterback Jim Kelly to running back Thurman Thomas which made it 24-13.

But that was to be the last time the Bills, who are now 7-4 and tied for first place with the Streaking Miami Dolphins in the AFC Eastern Division, were to do any high-fiving with each other.

Instead, it was the patriots, recalling tongue-biting losses to

Atlanta (16-15), the Jets (27-26) and New Orleans (28-24), who were slapping palms and helmets, telling each other that miracles still were possible in Massachusetts.

It still seemed improbable until rookie running back Patrick Egu, carrying the ball for the first time in the NFL, scored his first touchdown to give the Patriots a brief 13-10 lead. However the Bills responded for two quick touchdowns to reestablish the lead and put the Patriots on their comeback search.

The first step seemed easy. Grogan, horribly ineffective in the first half (3 of 11, 26 yards, 2 interceptions) connected with Stephens on a pair of passing plays, the second coming on a seldom-used screen pass which Stephens carried 37 yards to the Bills' 9.

After an offside penalty that was described in the play-by-play sheet as being blamed on several guys, Grogan looked at rookie Hart Lee Dykes and gave him a chance for redemption.

Dykes, the No. 1 pick with hands that alternate from stone to glue, had been feeling guilt pangs for several minutes following a double fumble that turned a potential Patriots touchdown into what developed into the Bills' go-ahead score.

But when Grogan lofted a spot pass to Dykes in the right corner of the end zone, the sins of the past were forgotten.

"It was a safe pattern," said Dykes. "Grogan asked if it could beat the guy [cornerback Kirby Jackson] and I told him yes. He threw it out there and I just went and got it."

The score, which closed Buffalo's lead to 24-20, seemed to be setting up the Patriots for another fantastic, frustrating finish, especially when New England marched down the field again and seemed to have scored the go-ahead touchdown on a 6-yard pass from Grogan to Cedric Jones.

But that play was called back when Robert Perryman was called for holding. Faced with a fourth and goal from the 16 a few minutes later, Berry had to make a decision - gamble on the touchdown or take the three points from a Jason Staurovsky field goal.

"I got some good advice from the sidelines," said Berry, explaining his decision to allow Staurovsky, whose toe was accurate all afternoon, to make the 34-yard attempt. "I was really thinking about going for the touchdown, but Doug Flutie and [special teams coach] Keith Rowen said something to me. We felt our defense could get the ball back. There were three minutes left, we had all our timeouts left. It made a lot of sense, so I took their advice."

It was advice turned to prophecy. On the Bills' first offensive play following the field goal, rookie cornerback Maurice Hurst stepped in front of a Kelly pass intended for James Lofton and returned it 16 yards for a touchdown. It was the first time all season the Patriots defense had scored a touchdown.

Two minutes later, New England scored a knockout punch on the Bills' final comeback attempt when Kelly was sacked by defensive end Gary Jeter on a fourth down play from the Patriots' 31. For added satisfaction, linebacker Johnny Rembert recovered the loose ball and returned it 27 yards.

But that was the fun part of the play, the fun part of an afternoon and the fun part of a season that hadn't had much of it until yesterday.

Boston Vintage Sports Flashback

Published every 2 weeks by David C. Southwick. Published for informational, research and entertainment purposes only. Publisher may be reached at soxpapers@gmail.com